

appear to be few water springs, and the rivers are dependent for their volume, not on melting snow or reservoirs of water underground, but upon the rainfall. In consequence, the Darling is, in wet seasons, a great stream, with more than seven hundred miles of navigable water, but it shrinks in dry weather to small proportions. No great navigable rivers lead to the interior of Australia as the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi lead to the interior of America.

The settlement of Australia.—For years the colonists of Sydney were unable to penetrate beyond the precipices of the Blue Mountains, which shut them in along a narrow strip of coast; but in 1813 adventurous explorers discovered a means of access, and rich grazing lands of the interior then became available. There is still no railway across Australia, and vast tracts of the interior are almost unexplored. Soon after the great inrush of gold-seekers into California in 1849, gold was discovered in Australia also, and in the colony of Victoria in particular, this led to a rapid growth of population. The climate has proved favourable to Europeans. Except in the mountainous districts, frost and snow are unknown, and, owing to the dry air, the heat, though great, is endurable. Emigration from Britain to Australia has now almost ceased, and the country depends upon the rather slow natural increase of population. Ninety-five per cent. of the inhabitants of European origin are of British descent, and already, though the foundations are so recent, a British nation, with two cities of half a million each and with other populous centres, has grown up in the southern hemisphere. It has hardly known the sound of war. Nelson's victory at Trafalgar left Britain so strong upon the sea that no hostile fleet has been able to approach Australia. Even when vast stretches of the coast remained unoccupied, Britain was able to warn off intruders and to make good her claim to the whole country.

The Commonwealth of Australia, 1901.—The Australian colonies followed the example of Canada, not only in securing complete constitutional liberty, but also in per-